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ABSTRACT

This report provides information on the number and percentage of students retained in grade during the 1983-84 school term in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Data were analyzed from reports filed by all principals and from the LAUSD Racial and Ethnic Survey, Fall 1983. Children's centers, adult schools, occupational centers, and development centers for the handicapped were not included. Results are reported by sex, grade level, and ethnicity. The following major findings are reported: (1) in June 1983, more students (31,161) were retained in grade than in the previous four years; (2) more males (59 percent) than females were retained regardless of grade or ethnicity; (3) retention rates for secondary students (grades 7-12) were higher than for elementary students (K-6); (4) most elementary students were retained in grade 1; and (5) more students were retained in grade 10 than in any other grade. Statistical data are included on five tables. (FMW)

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RETENTION PATTERNS IN THE LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, 1983-84

PUBLICATION NO. 456

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PUBLICATION NO. 456

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LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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PREFACE

The Research and Evaluation Branch publishes the retention report annually.

Data for this report represent all of the regular programs except children's centers, adult schools, occupational programs, and developmental centers for handicapped learners.

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Retention Patterns in the Los Angeles Unified School District, 1983-84

Abstract

This study reports the number and percentage of students retained in grade during the 1983-84 school term. The findings are grouped by sex, grade, and ethnicity.

Data for this report were obtained from the Principal's School Report, Form 3, completed in October 1984.

Enrollment data were recorded from the LAUSD Fall 1983 Enrollment Report prepared by the Pupil Statistics and Reports Section.

Summary of Major Findings

- In June 1984, 31,161 LAUSD students were retained in grade.
- More males (59%) than females were retained.
- For each ethnic group, males were retained more often than females.
- Retention rates for secondary students (grades 7-12) were higher than for elementary pupils (K-6).
- The most elementary pupils were retained in grade 1.
- For secondary students, most were retained in grade 10.

Introduction

The annual report on retention in grades K-12 is compiled for Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) by Research and Evaluation Branch. It uses findings from the Annual School Program Survey conducted each October, but does not include children's centers, adult schools or occupational centers.

Retention Policy in LAUSD

Retention is a placement option used when there is reasonable expectation that continued experience in the same grade will be best for the student. Recommendations for retention are to be based on a continuous and thorough analysis of the student's personal and educational development, and the possible benefits derived from such retention. This policy is implemented on an individual basis by the local school administrative and teaching staffs in close consultation with the student's parents.

A. Roles/Responsibilities for Retention

Promotion or retention is based on a student's reasonable progress in meeting district standards of achievement (Reference: Bulletin No. 12, Promotion Policy - K-12, Office of Instruction, August 14, 1979):

1. Responsibility for the individual's promotion to the next grade is a shared effort among administrator, teacher, counselor/supportive staff, and parent. However, the principal is responsible for the final decision.

2. In order to establish a definitive profile of the student's progress, certain records and appropriate documentation must be maintained.

    a. Teacher records must substantiate any recommendation.

    b. School organization data must substantiate alternatives or repeated opportunities for instruction.

    c. Cumulative files and attendance cards must indicate such items as performance test scores, progress, effort, and attendance.

    d. Dates of parent conferences must be noted.

3. The teacher is responsible for assigning the final mark and for recommending promotion or retention based upon assessment of reasonable progress.

4. Parent conferences shall be held as soon as it becomes evident that a student is not achieving or maintaining reasonable progress.

B. Retention in Elementary

1. A pupil may be retained at any grade in the elementary school. The decision to promote is based on evaluating individual progress and ability to achieve the measures of reasonable progress. Pupil success at grades K, 1, and 2 is most important before promotion to the upper grades, where increasing instructional program requirements and/or length of instructional day occur.

2. Retention at grade 6 is recommended only after other alternatives have been exhausted.

C. Retention in Junior High

1. Retention policy for junior high schools is developed at each school within the limits established by Board policy. A student who fails to complete one or more of those requirements may be retained.

   a. Success with the district's performance tests of essential skills.

   b. Success in the required and elective course content (or its equivalent) during any semester in grades 7-9 as measured by teacher evaluation.

   c. Progress in emotional, physical, and intellectual growth; exploration experiences; assimilation and application of skills; and socialization.

   d. Satisfactory completion of a course of study by achieving passing marks in courses representing at least 50 semester credits in the last two semesters. The completion of at least four semesters of attendance in a junior high or its equivalent.

2. The principal of the junior high school may advance a failing pupil because of overage.

D. Retention in Senior High

Policies governing promotion or retention of the senior high school student are determined by the number of credits earned within the framework of graduation requirements at the local school. Among the acceptable practices are:

1. A student is permitted to make up failures and other deficiencies in summer school in order to stay with his/her class. Although summer school classes carry credit, the student should make certain the credit will count toward graduation. Credit, for example, cannot be granted twice for the same subject as would be the case if a student repeated in order to improve a mark.

2. A student may be permitted to attend an adult school class in addition to day classes (Administrative Guide 2102).

3. A student who has been demoted is reinstated with the regular class as soon as the deficiences have been made up. The counselor not only works with the student to help him/her improve, but also must solicit the cooperation of the parents. This may be done by letter, phone call, or conference.

Purpose of the Study

This study summarizes district policies on retention and analyzes school-reported data in order to answer these questions:

1. What percentage of the student enrollment is retained annually?

2. Are there differences in retention with respect to sex?

3. Were there differences in retention with respect to ethnicity?

4. What is the pattern of retention between grades?

Procedure

Reports of students retained during the 1983-84 school year were submitted by all schools in October 1984 as part of the district's annual fall survey. These data provided information on retentions by grade, sex, and ethnicity.

The tables show data submitted on items 13 and 14 of form 3 in the annual fall survey. Enrollment totals for regions, divisions, and district were supplied by Pupil Statistics and Reports Section.

Findings

June 1984 retentions exceeded those of the previous 4 years. (Table 1)

Overall, 3% of elementary enrollment and 2% of junior high enrollment were retained in June 1984. (Table 4) Six percent of all enrolled students were retained. Of the grand total of 31,161 retained, 18,961 (61%) were in grades 10-12, and the majority (40%) were 10th graders. The largest proportions of pupils retained in elementary schools were in grades K, 1, and 2. (Table 5)

Administrative Regions D and G each reported 2% of their students retained in grades K-9, the lowest rate among the eight regions. Region B headed the list with 4% (2,016 students). (Tables 2 and 4)

Retention by Sex

This study found that more male students (59%) than female were retained at all grades, including kindergarten. (Table 2) Past studies indicated similar findings.

Retention by Ethnic Group

Table 3 shows retention patterns across ethnic groups compared with total enrollment proportions for the same groups. Four of the six groups of retainees are slightly underrepresented, while two show slightly higher percentages retained than enrolled.

Retention by Grade

In high school, more 10th graders (12,391) were retained than students in any other grade. The rate of retention in grade 10 is 40% of all retentions in grades K-12; in grade 11, 16%; and 5% in grade 12. High schools retained 61% of the 31,161 retainees in June 1984. (Table 5)

Junior high schools retained fewer pupils than all other levels (9%). Compared with enrollment, there were 1,595 (4%) 9th graders, 761 (2%) 8th graders, and 524 (1%) 7th graders retained, representing 9% of the total retained in all grades. (Table 5)

Of the 9,265 elementary pupils retained, the major percentages were in grades K, 1 and 2. (Table 5)

Conclusions

District patterns have been relatively consistent for several years.

1. More students are retained in grade 10 than any other.
2. Grade 1 shows more retentions than any other elementary grade.
3. More male students are retained than females regardless of grade or ethnicity.

Recommendations

Considering the findings, these lines of further inquiry are warranted:

1. Why are there higher proportions of retainees in grades K, 1, and 2 than in other elementary grades?

2. What accounts for the higher retention rate in grade 10 than in other high school grades?

3. In the specialized senior high continuation and options schools, why are the proportions of students retained higher than in traditional high schools, especially in grade 10?

4. What accounts for the significantly higher retention rates in some schools, compared with others?

Systematic research could provide answers to these questions, to the benefit of students and instructional planning.

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Students Enrolled and Retained, by District Totals, 1979-80 Through 1983-84

School Year	October Enrollment[a]	Retained in June	Retained, as % of Enrolled
1979-80	550,680	15,082	3%
1980-81	544,580	24,524	5
1981-82	543,233	26,947	5
1982-83	554,964	27,168	5
1983-84	556,047	31,161	6

[a]Enrollment figures are based on the racial-ethnic survey of each October. They include all regular elementary and secondary schools, magnet schools and programs, alternative schools, opportunity schools, continuation schools, and special education schools.

Table 2

Number and Percentage of Students Enrolled and Retained, by Sex and Administrative Region/Division, 1983-84

Region/ Division	Enrolled[a] as of October 1983	Retained in June 1984 Male No.	Male %	Female No.	Female %	Total Number Retained[a]	Total Retained as % of Enrolled
A	48,552	842	67%	421	33%	1,263	3%
B	55,290	1,215	60	801	40	2,016	4
C	54,034	1,075	62	669	38	1,744	3
D	54,315	740	63	440	37	1,180	2
E	57,803	1,086	66	620	34	1,706	3
F	58,624	989	61	633	39	1,622	3
G	53,959	753	57	460	43	1,213	2
H	49,043	846	62	555	38	1,401	3
Sr. High	119,562	11,112	59	7,849	41	18,961	16
Sp. Ed.	4,865	41	75	14	25	55	1
Total	556,047	18,266	3	12,895	2	31,161	6
% of Retained			59		41		

Note. Percentages have been rounded to nearest whole number.

[a]Enrolled and Retained figures include regular elementary and secondary schools, magnet schools and programs, alternative schools, opportunity schools, continuation schools, and special education schools. They do not include children's centers, adult schools, occupational centers, or developmental centers for the hardicapped. Enrollment based on racial-ethnic survey, fall 1983.

Table 3

Number of Students Retained, by Ethnicity and Administrative Region/Division, June 1984

Region/ Division	Grades	Race/Ethnicity: Amer. Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Filip.	Black Not Hisp.	Hispanic	White Not Hisp.	Total Retained[a]
A	Elem.	0	37	15	205	579	223	1,059
	Jr. High	0	7	3	74	74	46	204
	Total	0	44	18	279	653	269	1,263
B	Elem.	1	3	1	334	1,478	51	1,868
	Jr. High	0	0	0	104	40	4	148
	Total	1	3	1	438	1,518	55	2,016
C	Elem.	2	3	1	854	404	23	1,277
	Jr. High	0	1	0	410	36	10	457
	Total	2	4	1	1,264	440	33	1,744
D	Elem.	3	37	3	423	536	86	1,088
	Jr. High	0	1	0	66	20	5	92
	Total	3	38	3	489	556	91	1,180
E	Elem.	3	30	2	102	911	346	1,394
	Jr. High	1	2	0	29	164	116	312
	Total	4	32	2	131	1,075	462	1,706
F	Elem.	5	10	4	143	870	320	1,352
	Jr. High	0	0	2	64	102	102	270
	Total	5	10	6	207	975	422	1,622
G	Elem.	1	42	1	10	1,114	32	1,200
	Jr. High	0	0	0	2	11	0	13
	Total	1	42	1	12	1,125	32	1,213
H	Elem.	2	65	10	39	1,047	70	1,233
	Jr. High	1	5	1	18	132	11	168
	Total	3	70	11	57	1,179	81	1,401
Sr. High		22	617	158	5,293	8,875	3,996	18,961
Sp. Ed.		0	0	0	23	29	3	55
Total		41	860	201	8,193	16,422	5,444	31,161
% Retained June 1984	K-12	0.1%	3%	1%	26%	53%	17%	100%[c]
Enrolled Oct. 1983[b]		1,722	34,722	7,546	116,110	280,689	115,258	556,047
Group % of Enrolled		0.3%	6.2%	1.4%	20.9%	50.5%	20.7%	100%[c]

[a]See footnote a, Table 1. [b]Enrollment by ethnicity based on racial-ethnic survey, fall 1983. [c]Slightly under 100% due to rounding.

Table 4

Number and Percentage of Students Enrolled and Retained, by Educational Level and Administrative Region/Division, 1983-84

Region/ Division	Enrolled[a] October 1983			Retained June 1984			Retained as % of Enrolled		
	Elem.	Jr. High	Total	Elem.	Jr. High	Total	Elem.	Jr. High	Total
A	31,684	16,868	48,552	1,059	204	1,263	3%	1%	3%
B	41,349	13,941	55,290	1,218	798	2,016	3	6	4
C	38,712	15,322	54,034	1,157	587	1,744	3	4	3
D	32,046	22,269	54,315	1,038	142	1,180	3	1	2
E	35,423	22,380	57,803	1,175	531	1,706	3	2	3
F	34,306	24,318	58,624	1,211	411	1,622	4	2	3
G	39,115	14,844	53,959	1,200	13	1,213	3	0.1	2
H	36,494	12,549	49,043	1,207	194	1,401	3	2	3
Sub Total	289,129	142,491	431,620	9,265	2,880	12,145	3	2	3
Sr. High			119,562			18,961			16
Sp. Ed.			4,865			55			1
Total			556,047			31,161			6

[a]Elementary enrollment includes 289,129 elementary students in grade K-6 for regular and magnet schools, but does not include 13,536 6th graders assigned to 6-9 junior high or K-12 alternative schools. Junior high enrollment includes grades 7-9 plus 6th and 9th graders assigned to reconfigured junior and senior high schools. Senior high enrollment includes grades 10-12. Special Education enrollment includes grades 9-12.

Table 5

Summary of Retention, by Grade and Type of School, June 1984

Elementary	Grade							
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6[a]	Total
No. Enrolled	42,766	47,204	45,152	43,651	42,383	41,309	40,200	302,665
No. Retained	1,548	3,018	1,742	1,241	907	576	233	9,265
% Retained	4	6	4	3	2	1	1	3

Junior High	Grade			
	7	8	9[b]	Total
Number Enrolled	43,028	43,059	42,868	128,955
Number Retained	524	761	1,595	2,880
% Retained	1	2	4	2

Senior High Regular & Magnets	Grade			
	10	11	12	Total
Number Enrolled	48,812	37,002	29,930	115,744
Number Retained	11,105	4,578	1,459	17,142
% Retained	23	12	5	15

Senior High Continuation and Options	Grade			
	10	11	12	Total
Number Enrolled	1,932	1,256	630	3,818
Number Retained	1,286	321	212	1,819
% Retained	66	26	34	48

Special Education	Total
Number Enrolled	4,865
Number Retained	55
% Retained	1

District (K-12)	Total
Number Enrolled	556,047
Number Retained	31,161
% Retained	6

Note. "% Retained" is in proportion to number enrolled within one grade or total enrolled across several grades grouped together.

[a]Includes grade 6 from junior high. [b]All grade 9 included in junior high total.